

October 1, 2010

Russ Arrington
Park Manager
Montgomery County Department of Parks and Planning
8000 Meadowbrook Lane
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815

Dear Mr. Arrington,

I am writing on behalf of the Town of Garrett Park, to express certain maintenance concerns and request improvements to Wells Park, which is located within the Town. The recommendations in this letter are the result of consultative process by the Town's Parks and Open Space Committee (POSCO), which is composed of Town citizens, and reflects their hard work and the results of a survey of Town citizens seeking views as to the preferred uses, necessary repairs and desired improvements to all the parks located within the Town. As you know, there are parks within Garrett Park that are wholly owned and maintained by the Town of Garrett Park, and there are two parks owned by Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning: Garrett-Waverly, which is maintained by the Town of Garrett Park pursuant to an agreement with M-NCPPC, and Wells Park, which is both owned and wholly maintained by M-NCPPC.

At Wells Park, our first priority is improving the safety of the installed play equipment. The ground under the play structure and swings is now bare and muddy; it should be covered with six to eight inches of wood chips. Because the Town generates its own wood chips, we could provide chips for that purpose, if that would help implement that improvement. Also, the perimeter boards and timbers surrounding the play area are decayed. Owing to the heavy shade and moisture of the location, wood is not a good choice for a border material to retain wood chips. In the Town's Cambria playground, we have had good experience with eight-inch high Childforms Funtimbers (<http://www.childforms.com/funtimbers.cfm>), which are plastic and can we obtained from Playground Specialists, Inc. The blue curving slide needs cleaning. We believe that adding the wood chips will help keep it clean. The twirling disc is old, rusted and has caused a few minor injuries. We suggest that it be replaced with a more modern play structure.

The bottom of the trash receptacle near the entrance pathway to the park has corroded and dropped out. The barrel portion of the receptacle therefore is in immediate need of replacement.

We also have observed that the grill is not used because it is rusty. The picnic tables and benches are showing their age and wear; two have wobbly planks. We recommend that the grill be cleaned and the picnic tables and benches be repaired or replaced, so that the

Park will be more attractive for picnics and barbeques. Again, we suggest plastic or a similar material for the benches and tables, owing to the shady, damp location that makes wood a less long-lasting choice. Also, a ground anchor juts out in that vicinity. It constitutes a danger and should be removed.

The following are some additional requests:

1. Improvements to the creek/drainage channel.

The concrete pipe that serves as a bridge over the intermittent creek should be removed because it is broken and dangerous. We suggest that it be replaced with a bridge made of slats (plastic that looks like wood) forming a convex surface over the creek, with hand rails. The banks of the creek should be stabilized and treated so they are less hazardous and look more attractive.

2. Improvements to the vegetation around the park.

We request removal of non-native invasive plants (such as bush honeysuckle) throughout the Park. We also suggest that attractive vegetation be planted around the park perimeter. As you know, the Town is responsible for planting, maintenance and removal of trees within the Town right-of-way: a strip approximately 10'-12' wide just inside the curb line on two sides of Wells Park. The Town would be pleased to work with M-NCPPC to improve these two periphery areas.

3. Play equipment for older children.

Residents also have requested the addition of a zip line (string a wire rope), a rope bridge, a rope swing, and a tire swing. Since this equipment would be for older children, it would not require special safety arrangements.

We appreciate your attention to Wells Park. It is an important part of our beloved Garrett Park. Anything you can do to refurbish this popular spot and address the concerns and needs of our Town residents will be welcome. The Town and the Parks and Open Space Committee stand ready to cooperate with interest and willingness.

Sincerely yours,

Chris Keller
Mayor